

St. Mary's Parent Council Meeting

Dec. 12, 2024, 7pm

Virtual - Google Meet

Present

Alicia Doud
Dana Wirachowsky
Amy Becker
Ariana Lecorps
Ash Louise
Alana Lloyd
Greg Berckert
Krista Worobec
Alexa Batsel

Ryan Becker
Trisha Cadwallader
Jessica Durk
Marie Osadchy
Lindsay Poloni
Chioma Nwokealisi
Annalie Almayda
Eunice Akrofi
Brad van Middelkoop

Meeting Begins 7:02pm.

1) Prayer/Land acknowledgment- Brad van Middlekoop.

2) Presidents Report- Alicia Doud:

Setting Council Positions:

- A) Naming of Chair: Dana Wirachowsky motioned for Alicia Doud to take position. Seconded by Trisha Cadwallader.
- B) Vice Chair: Dana Wirachowsky nominated by Alicia Doud. Seconded by Trisha Cadwallader.
- C) Secretary Treasurer: Ariana Lecorps volunteered to take the position. Motion to add signing authority to Alicia Doud and Ariana Lecorps. Seconded by Amy Becker. All in favour.
- D) * No major duties required except signatures from two people to get bank account reactivated.

Discussion regarding usage of money- \$4000 carried over from previous Council. Brad shared staff suggestion of new water fountain. Parent suggested new ovens for Foods room but new Foods teacher isn't feeling as much of a need for them. Potential to get new ovens and move to Holy Trinity. Lindsay Poloni raised concern about purchasing items that would remain in the building which may not move into HTA. *Attending parents invited to email Brad or Alicia with further ideas.*

3) Accolade from Brad to Alicia Doud for being a huge contributor to parent council as a solo project lately.

4) 7:16 pm -Feedback on completed events- (Ex. Staggered start, Rapunzel, French, Fine Art Academy, Hot Lunches, November Break, Super Student Lunch, Pep Rally, Mass, Sports Teams, etc.): **What are kids talking about and what should we continue?**

Discussion:

- Parents shared overwhelmingly positive feedback about the events and experiences at St. Mary's so far this school year. The welcoming atmosphere during the first week and Spirit Week was highlighted as a great start, with some noting it was their first time in the Catholic system and appreciating the sense of community and support. Parents praised the dedication of teachers, who made time for unscheduled interviews, and engaging coaches who support extracurricular activities. The variety of programs and opportunities, including Options, sports teams, and clubs like the art club, were well-received, with specific mentions of the pep rally, Turkey Trot, and hot lunch options as standouts. Several parents noted the strong sense of inclusion and community between Fine Arts and regular stream students, as well as the excitement for younger siblings to join next year. Feedback also included appreciation for flexible scheduling of assemblies, which rotate through different academic blocks, and the enthusiasm students feel for their activities and friendships. A few parents offered constructive feedback, such as expectations for Outdoor Ed not aligning fully with its promotion, but overall, parents expressed satisfaction and excitement about the year's progress.

5) **Discussion: Food Hamper needs.** Inquiries about donations needed can be emailed to the school.

6) 7:27pm: **Sharing of upcoming changes to our school division.**

A) Gr. 6 will be added for next school year and will be able to be involved in all current programs (French, Fine Arts, Regular, Sports Academy).

B) Entire French K-6 Program will move into the existing St. Mary's building once the Jr. high moves into Holy Trinity. 7-9 French will be housed at Holy Trinity. 10-12 French will be housed at McCoy. An english stream would also run K-6 at St.Mary's at the same time.

C) Next major change- Due to merging of programming at HTA, St.Mary's will offer a Sports and Wellness Academy to keep in line with the programming at St.Francis. This will also start in Sept. 2025 as well. Presentation was given about the general philosophy of the new Academy.

Discussion regarding proposed changes for St.Mary's opened to parents:

- Several concerns were raised about upcoming changes at the school, including the integration of Grade 6 students, program costs, facility capacity, and the impact on existing programs. Parents inquired about potential increased fees for Fine Arts, which were confirmed to rise but not due to the Grade 6 addition. Questions about the Sports and Wellness Academy highlighted interest in new sports options, program flexibility, and the eligibility of students, with assurances that the Academy would operate as a cohort program and include developmental teams, though no crossover with other academies is planned. Concerns about staffing, particularly for French Immersion, were acknowledged, with staffing decisions pending enrollment numbers. Parents expressed apprehension about

tight timelines for registration and the ability to attract French Immersion teachers. Questions about transportation confirmed that busing would be available citywide for Grade 6 students and for the new Holy Trinity Academy, set to open in February 2027, though adjustments to this timeline remain possible. Regarding facilities, it was confirmed that SMS has sufficient classroom and locker capacity for Grade 6 students. Parents also questioned why boundaries were not adjusted to fill Mother Teresa School instead of moving Grade 6 students, with the response emphasizing the importance of offering equal opportunities at both junior highs. Modernization of SMS was discussed, with Brad explaining that Alberta Education had prioritized a new build over previous modernization plans, ultimately benefiting the division. A follow-up meeting with senior administrators was suggested to address broader decision-making concerns, and parents were encouraged to participate in the Parent Association Board for ongoing discussions with trustees and the superintendent.

8) **Adjournment-** Dana Wirachowsky made motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:24pm. Seconded by Alicia Doud.